

### AMERICANS PAYING TOO MUCH IN TAXES

(Mr. BAKER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, the previous speaker apparently forgot the Bill Clinton tax increase, 4.3 cents in the gas tax. Did he forget that? That is on the working poor. How about taxing Social Security benefits of those people who had sense enough to save with \$35,000 a year income each year?—\$35,000, a couple, and they tax 85 percent of your Social Security benefits that you paid 16 percent of your payroll in each year of your working life. That is what Clinton has done for you.

Mr. Speaker, each day millions of Americans wake up early, get dressed, kiss their families good-bye and go to work. They then spend the next 2 hours 47 minutes working for the Federal Government to pay their taxes. That is more time than they spend working to feed, clothe, and earn money for their family's housing.

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage. When American families are spending more time working for the Government than they do supporting their own families, something is wrong. Americans deserve to keep more, not less of their own income for their own families, and Congress should be doing everything we can to get this Government off their backs.

### AMERICANS SUPPORT RAISING MINIMUM WAGE

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, congressional Republicans are using every single trick in the book to block a vote on raising the minimum wage in this country a mere 90 cents, even though the minimum wage is at a 40-year low.

Yesterday Senate Republicans used a procedural maneuver to dodge raising the minimum wage. They march in lockstep with Speaker GINGRICH and his leadership team, who have been blocking every single effort to bring up a vote in this body on raising the minimum wage.

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It is only the latest example of how Speaker GINGRICH and his Republican leadership are out of step with the mainstream of this country. They, in fact, wanted to give a \$245 billion tax break to the richest Americans in this country, to give the richest corporations in this country a \$17 billion windfall, but they do not in fact want to see the minimum wage raised by 90 cents.

The New York Times said today that 84 percent of the U.S. folks are for an increase in the minimum wage. Today 13 House Republicans, to their credit, will break ranks with their leadership

to join those of us who said let us increase the minimum wage. Let us do that for the hard-working, responsible Americans in this country. Let us give them an increase in their salaries.

### DO SOMETHING FOR AMERICANS BY PASSING HEALTH CARE REFORM AND INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Congress has a golden opportunity to actually do something for the American people. We can pass the necessary health care reform bills this year and also increase the minimum wage, like my colleagues have said.

The Kassebaum-Kennedy health care bill in the Senate will enhance the portability of coverage by ending permanent exclusion for preexisting conditions. However, the inclusion in the House of the medical savings accounts, malpractice reform, and also the taking away of State regulation of multiple employer welfare plans will hurt health care reform.

Key Senators, including Senator KASSEBAUM, have discouraged the inclusion of these medical savings accounts because it has no place in this bill. House Republicans want to federalize insurance regulations for self-insured small business. The States are now regulating these plans, and have served as a laboratory for innovation on improving coverage and combating fraud. Why do we want to bring that to Washington?

The Nation's Governors, State legislators, and insurance commissioners have opposed these provisions, but the majority Republicans have put it in. Let us give the people reasonable health care reform and a minimum wage increase.

### LET US CELEBRATE EARTH DAY IN A BIPARTISAN WAY

(Mrs. CLAYTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, next Monday we will celebrate Earth Day. I wonder if we will celebrate Earth Day in a bipartisan way.

It is true that in recent years, we had witnessed some improvement in environmental standards for clean air and water, due in large part to bipartisan support provided previously by Congress.

Yet, the 104th Congress has witnessed a dramatic change in attitude among many of my Republican colleagues.

Escapes and loopholes have been inserted in many measures on behalf of those who would pollute, weakening the very laws that protect the health of the Nation.

Thus, despite a quarter of a century of effort, investment, and concentra-

tion—toxic waste, unclean air, and unsafe drinking water is still a way of life for millions in the United States.

Competing interests between the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land on which we live, versus economic efficiencies and profit for business interests have resulted in legislative action and inaction that has delayed and denied environmental improvement.

Those who have suffered the most are the voiceless and the powerless.

Yet, in spite of it all, there remains hope for the future.

When we celebrate Earth Day on Monday, April 22, I hope all Members will pledge to provide something to celebrate about.

### 104TH CONGRESS HAS SHIFTED FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT TO ENFORCEMENT, NOT WEAKENING, OF EXISTING REGULATIONS

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, let us think about and talk about, just for a moment, exactly what the 104th Congress has done with respect to the environment, because there is so much deception that is being propagated about it, it is difficult to separate the truth from the reality or from the fiction.

The reality is that for the first time ever this Congress actually passed a Clean Water Act that provides for relief from and accounting for nonpoint source pollution. We had never done that before.

This Congress increased the funding for the Clean Water Act from \$1.2 to \$2.4 billion, a tremendous increase.

This Congress did not weaken one single regulation with respect to the standards themselves, but what this Congress did do is, it shifted where the focus of enforcement will be. It shifted it away from Washington, Washington bureaucrats with a one-size-fits-all attitude and approach, and to the States.

There is, in fact, notwithstanding the fact that many would like us to believe otherwise, there is no difference with respect to the goal, but there is a tremendous difference with respect to the way we get there, the process.

### AMERICA NEEDS AN INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE TO SUSTAIN ITS HIGH QUALITY STANDARD OF LIVING

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, we know what distinguishes America from Third World countries, not just its democratic processes but its standard of living, the high quality of life we have in this country. Well, at least that is the way it used to be when people could get good paying jobs in industry. That is not the case now.